

The Voice

The Newsletter of the Cedar Falls United Church of Christ November 7, 2017.

Living Thank-full-y

Dear Family and Friends of Cedar Falls UCC,

First, I want to acknowledge that there is much pain in the world from the gun violence. Sunday, a gunman took the lives of many of those attending First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas (about 30 miles southeast of San Antonio.) Please keep all these families in your prayers, but also consider what you may want to do about the availability of these kind of weapons.

Do you live life giving God thanks? Paul talked about giving God thanks for the communities of faith that were seeking to follow Jesus. His model of ministry was to thank God for the people and also to advise them on how to live in their circumstances. I seek to live each day full of thanks to God for this community of faith and the ministry we do together.

Sunday November 5th we had a fireside chat where Larry Buccholz, Council President, shared what Council has been discussing along with the Endowment and Memorial Committee. Financially we can go on as we have this past year for another couple of years, but unless we grow we won't be able to maintain this level of ministry. We will be inviting additional reflections and ideas as we approach our Annual Meeting in January 2018.

I have contacted other denominations to see if they have any churches in our area that needs a pastor. We are trying to begin conversation with other small churches to see if we could share my time to help extend both our ministries. We have also extended invitations to some other congregations to share our building. At the moment both these paths are being explored, but nothing concrete has evolved from it. It is discouraging to have so few in worship, yet our visitors are less likely to return unless we have more people in worship. One of the ways we can get encouraged if we have more regular attendance at worship. We are so blessed to have Celeste and her spirit of encouragement to lead the choir and congregation in singing. We are blessed to have Greg play our organ and piano. He also gives of his time and resources to bless this congregation. We are blessed to have Lacy want to learn liturgical dance and share her energy with us. We are blessed to have Ava read the scripture in worship. We are blessed to have Elijah dance in the pew when he is enjoying the music. We are blessed to have all those who come to worship be present to one another and pray for one another.

I think of those who can't make it to worship any more or not very often because of their health. It saddens me, but I also know we are not forgotten by them. We need all those who love the church to pray for us.

Sometimes we focus on what we don't have instead of who we do have. In these days we may find it difficult to be positive, but that is exactly what we need to be in and out of church. We need a positive attitude not only in church, but in our world that is filled with violence and isolation. It isn't always doing what is best for us as individuals, but what is best for the community.

My heart is full of thank-full-ness for this faith community. We are working well together to make a difference in this community. We are being thought of when wondering if there are any churches open to people wherever they are on life's journey. We are having meaningful conversations on Wednesday night on a variety of topics. We are responding to Kaden Kloset needs. We are able to respond to the Community Meal with not only our money, but many people helping.

The United Church of Christ has launched a new partnership invitation to all our churches. At the last General Synod they began the "3 Great Loves" initiative –an initiative that focuses on Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation. "...And the greatest of these is love." (–a quote from 1 Corinthians 13:13) There may be no greater calling in today's ministry than the call to love. 3 Great Loves is a denomination-wide effort that about engaging the UCC to take action and to show the impact of the UCC, working together as one church, with one voice and one vision – a vision of A Just World for All.

Our General Minister and President, John C. Dorhauer, invites us to consider supporting the 3 Great Loves initiative over the next 2 years by planning activities around the following time line for each of the Loves: 1. NOW through the Spring of 2018 – Love of Neighbor: whether it is a neighbor in need who lives next door or on the other side of the world, many are faced with the

need for protection, shelter, and support. 2. Summer 2018 – Winter 2019 – Love of Children: children in many families and neighborhoods need school supplies to overcome inequalities in our education systems. 3. Spring of 2019 – Love of Creation: taking care of our environment is one of the most important responsibilities we have as the Church.

You can learn more about 3 Great Loves at www.3greatloves.org. Do you have any activities you would like to see happen that might be focused on in these 3 time suggestions?

May God's love bring us together and may God's grace hold us together. We are making a difference where we can and how we can. You can make the church stronger. Invite and bring friends to worship. God bless you! God is awesome! God loves you!

In Christ we serve,
Pastor Sue

FULLY RELY ON GOD!



THANK YOU NOTES

Thank you to all those who are faithfully coming to church. Your presence is a gift you give!

Thank you to Colleen Kelly for her organizing and on-going gift of time as she worked in Kaden's Kloset to get the winter clothes available to families. It is looking great. Colleen has been re-organizing the room to be easier to shop and find things. If you haven't stopped by, please do so.

President's Message

Thank you to those who worked at the Community Meal, October 31st. Thank you to Barb Kuhlman, Larry Buccholz, Ken and Ronda Connelly, Pastor Sue, and Cris Vallecillo.

Thank you to Dick Douglas for sharing a part of his faith journey on October 15th.

We extend a big note of thanks to all of you who have donated to our roof repair. The roof has been repaired. Thanks so much.

We want to share a special thank you to Colleen for all the work she has done and continues to do with Kaden's Kloset. Sunday we had a special help day with Kaden's Kloset: Celeste, Cynthia, Cris, Aloha, Bill, Melissa and Pastor Sue all gave of their time to change from summer clothes to winter clothes. Thank you all for giving of your time.

Thank you to Rev Janice Springer for leading a workshop on the book of Psalm. This was the regularly scheduled workshop. Thank you for leading a workshop on November 8th as well. This one had been postponed from October to November. We appreciate your gift of time and knowledge.

I appreciated what Dick said and if you weren't able to be in worship but would like to listen...see him share, I have made a DVD of his sharing his faith story. I have now made DVDs of all those who have shared a part of their faith story and they are available in my office. Celeste, Greg, myself, Janice and Dick sharing is now available. (Pastor Sue)

The "Raise the Roof" campaign is completed with over \$4000 raised which really helps our budget. A final tabulation will be noted in a future Voice.

On November 5th, we met for our Fireside Chat. At this time I had 2 topics which I brought up for discussion. First, is a task force for Outreach. The purpose is to reach out to present and past members as well as follow up with visitors to assure that we keep in touch with the folks we should be serving. Second, will be a review and conversation of our present budget and endowment fund status. We will have an open and frank discussion of our financial status at the Annual Meeting in January and this will begin the preparation for that meeting topic. Feel free to give me suggestions of other ideas for the Fireside Chat.

The Church Council will be putting together the 2018 budget for the church and a pledge drive for that budget in November. Please be giving thought to your upcoming pledge. The Council will approve a preliminary budget at our November 27th Council meeting and a final budget at the December 18th Council meeting. The final budget will be based on pledges received and presented to the congregation at the January Annual Meeting.

Sincerely,
Larry Buccholz, Council President-

*Pledge Cards coming
*Budget for 2018

United Fellowship

First Thursday of the month meeting date, time varies according to location. We will be going to Barn Happy near Cedar Falls for our Dec. outing. We will need to make a reservation so please let Barb Kuhlman know if you will be able to join us by Monday Dec. 5. The group had a fun time in Nov. in Gladbrook. We drove around Union Grove State Park, ate a good meal at Spankys, which had been an old movie theatre, and then saw the works of skilled craftsman, Patrick Acton, at the Matchstick Museum. If you are available on the first Thursday of the month, join us in our food and fellowship adventures.

Special Offering Neighbors in Need A United Church of Christ Offering

This offering supports grants for our neighbors all over the world. I served a church that did a community shower for families that just had a baby or were about to have a baby in that year. The grant money they received allowed them to buy cases of diapers to give out. 70 – 100 families were helped at that shower. This church had as its neighborhood 47% of the children living in poverty. This community shower helped so many children every year. Please consider giving to this special offering.

Morning Circle

Next meeting is November 16th.
Morning Circle meets at 9:30 a.m.
on the Third Thursday

We will be decorating our cheer boxes at our Nov. meeting and filling and delivering them at our Dec. meeting. For our Nov. meeting we would welcome

any old Christmas cards and shoe boxes you have to share. Bring to church and put on a table in the fellowship room. For our Dec. meeting we welcome you to bring things to share in these cheer boxes. Also, please suggest names to us of folks who would like one of our cheer boxes. Thank You.

Cedar Falls UCC Foster Children's Closet (Kaden's Kloset)

What a vital ministry we are providing for foster families in the Cedar Falls/ Waterloo area! We have even been reaching out to families as far north as Mason City. We have received donations from individuals and other churches for this ministry. This is a visible community outreach that is making a positive impression in the community, but even more importantly it is helping foster families and a few other families get clothes, shoes, coats, and personal items that are badly needed for the children.

We will be helping young adults as they age out of the foster care system, but right now we haven't had a lot of need for this service. We have been getting a lot of use for small children. Please keep all the children in your prayers.

Church Community News

A new support group for transgender/ gender nonconforming has meetings in the Waterloo and Charles City areas. For more information go to: www.transcend.lgbt or e-mail someone at: contact@transcend.lgbt or phone: 319-359-7774

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An Open and Affirming Congregation

“Listening to God with open minds.

Welcoming all with open arms.”

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